

Workforce Observations

For The North Central WDA

December, 2001



River Valley Employment Levels Shadow Wider Trends

By the time the month of November comes around on the calendar, the last signs of fall are far behind us and the first signs of winter are apparent, at least in most years. Fields are bare now, and have been for weeks or longer and Thanksgiving officially inaugurates the end of the summer and the coming of the long, cold months ahead. The seasonal changes that announce the coming change of the year are not only manifested in the weather but in the job market, as well.

Reductions in levels of employment in all the industrial sectors is about the only thing that anyone could safely predict for the month of November, but just how much these job numbers will be going down is another matter. For one thing, seasonal factors have an impact right across the board in every industrial sector, from manufacturing, to trade, service, transportation, and government. The falling job levels in some sectors is the direct result of the arrival of the colder weather, for example, and in another sector may be due to an indirect effect. This may be most obvious in those businesses most closely related to the farming community.

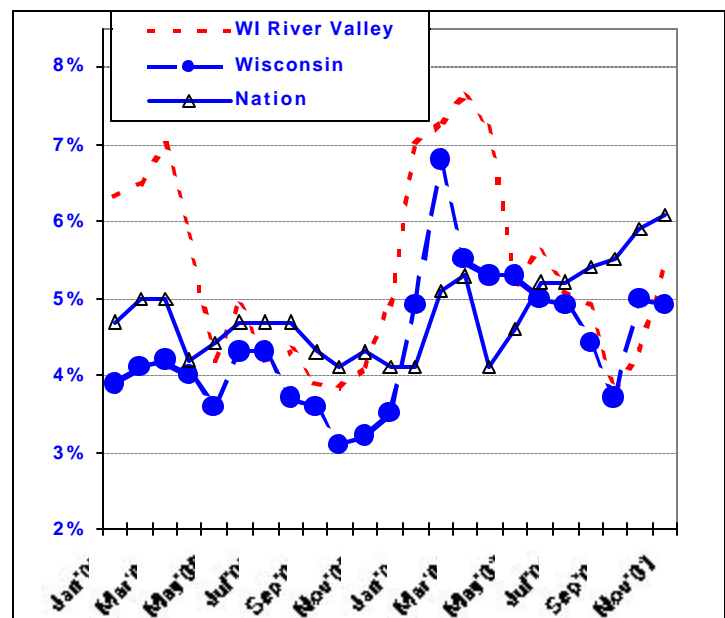
Although nonfarm wage and salary employment statistics don't take much note of agricultural employment, what happens in the farm community definitely

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had a direct impact on many thousands of jobs in Wisconsin and the River Valley. Obvious examples of this would be in the retail sector and people who sell things directly to farmers, such as implement dealers, farm supply stores and co-ops, and other large retail establishments with a large inventory of farm-related items such as tires, dairy supplies and other things. The number of employees in these busi-

nesses usually goes down a bit as the agricultural world contracts in the face of winter's blasts.

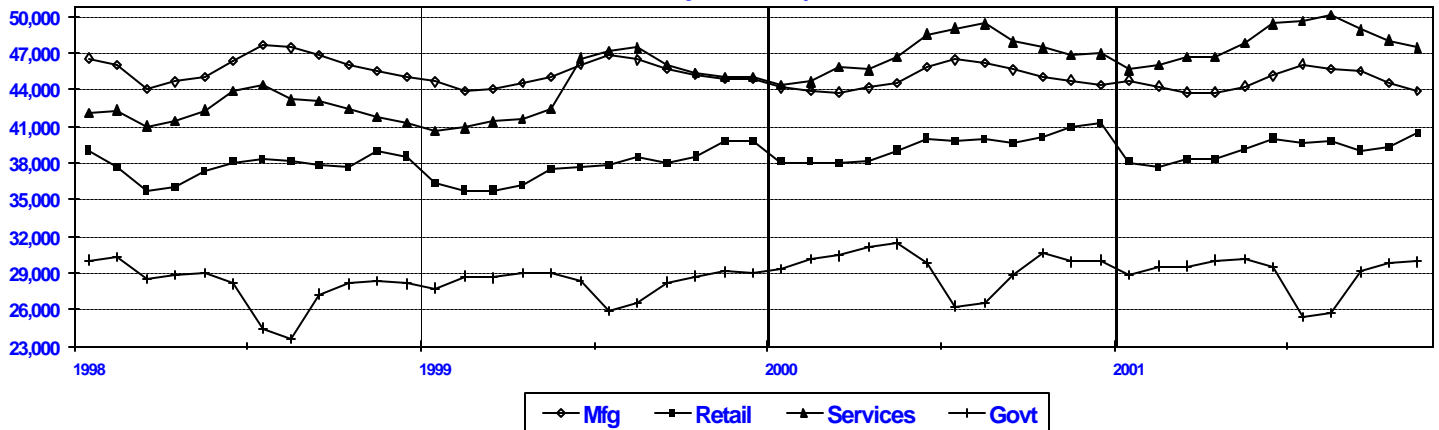
But the arrival of the colder weather is reflected in other industrial sectors, as well. Construction employment is certainly going to decline as the temperature outside falls below the point where people can work safely or comfortably. Construction work is then done indoors where possible, with such tasks as most concrete work, roofing and other “outside” jobs,



curtailed for the duration. So, the colder weather, even in the modern period when the majority of people never even see a farm from one year to another, still exerts it's ancient influence over the world of work, and things seem to slip into a slightly slower mode for several months.

Rates of unemployment were up in November in all of the River Counties, but this is normal for an early winter month. The rate for the district was 4.7 percent in November, compared to 3.6 percent 12 months ago. We are surely in a period of economic slump recently, not only here but throughout the state and region. But, the thing to remember is that historically, the recent rates of unemployment are still low. In fact, the district wide drop in jobs over the year was only about 1,000 out of about 204,000 jobs total. That's not bad.

Employment by Major Industry Division



For The Month Of November	Adams	Forest	Lang.	Lincoln	Mara.	Oneida	Portage	Vilas	Wood	Region
Labor Force	8,351	4,756	9,526	14,817	75,775	20,517	37,408	11,121	40,609	222,880
Employed	8,146	4,569	9,089	14,380	74,129	19,885	36,534	10,837	39,498	217,067
Unemployed	205	187	437	437	1,646	632	874	284	1,111	5,813
Unemployment rate(%)	2.5	3.9	4.6	2.9	2.2	3.1	2.3	2.6	2.7	2.6%
Total, all industries**	4,005	3,222	8,043	12,316	71,058	18,167	32,933	8,051	46,567	204,362
Construction & Mining	174	120	436	603	3,539	1,334	1,226	1,048	1,819	10,299
Manufacturing	394	539	1,730	4,177	18,517	2,153	5,858	521	9,932	43,821
Transportation & Util.	182	202	418	460	4,056	711	1,929	253	3,293	11,504
Wholesale Trade	111	41	449	465	5,386	382	1,632	142	1,443	10,051
Retail Trade	877	481	1,878	2,326	12,656	4,952	5,999	2,004	9,225	40,398
FIRE	100	96	263	251	4,911	458	3,660	318	915	10,972
Services	897	497	1,602	1,840	13,944	5,261	7,339	1,719	14,263	47,362
Government	1,270	1,246	1,267	2,194	8,049	2,916	5,290	2,046	5,677	29,955
Change from previous mo.	Adams	Forest	Lang.	Lincoln	Mara.	Oneida	Portage	Vilas	Wood	Region
Civilian Labor Force*	273	149	-116	222	-131	124	243	-182	-1,146	-564
Employed	401	229	139	502	954	379	624	107	-703	2,632
Unemployed	-128	-80	-255	-280	-1,085	-255	-381	-289	-443	-3,196
Unemployment rate(%)	-1.6	-1.9	-2.6	-2.0	-1.4	-1.2	-1.1	-2.5	-1.0	0.0
Total, all industries**	-46	-54	-54	-81	172	-334	-315	-338	385	-665
Construction & Mining	-3	-36	-36	-11	-87	-90	-68	-30	-153	-514
Manufacturing	1	-2	-2	-11	-317	-7	-389	-1	-2	-730
Transportation & Util.	0	1	1	-26	-56	-1	-19	-9	-40	-149
Wholesale Trade	-1	-8	-8	7	174	-4	12	1	-77	96
Retail Trade	-17	10	10	-23	490	-120	257	-131	615	1,091
FIRE	-2	2	2	-5	43	-5	9	2	-6	40
Services	-19	-11	-11	-30	-137	-145	-115	-182	2	-648
Government	-5	-10	-10	18	62	38	-2	12	46	149
Change from year ago	Adams	Forest	Lang.	Lincoln	Mara.	Oneida	Portage	Vilas	Wood	Region
Civilian Labor Force*	47	13	152	85	-318	301	316	78	-469	205
Employed	87	63	131	177	16	512	390	278	-340	1,314
Unemployed	-40	-50	21	-92	-334	-211	-74	-200	-129	-1,109
Unemployment rate(%)	-0.5	-1.1	0.2	-0.7	-0.4	-1.1	-0.3	-1.8	-0.3	0.0
Total, all industries**	8	63	-33	-276	44	247	-188	225	144	233
Construction & Mining	3	23	-42	25	80	57	-9	79	16	231
Manufacturing	-36	5	-76	-243	-899	40	-346	4	-176	-1,727
Transportation & Util.	7	-3	2	-12	70	-16	90	20	-6	152
Wholesale Trade	15	2	-33	25	74	-14	-21	2	-22	27
Retail Trade	38	7	19	-36	17	211	-290	46	-232	-220
FIRE	3	0	18	-55	57	-17	26	8	-4	36
Services	-96	29	65	-3	391	-174	385	54	468	1,118
Government	74	0	14	22	254	160	-23	12	101	615

* Includes participants residing in area. ** Includes employment with employers located in area. Estimates are NOT seasonally adjusted. Current month estimates are preliminary. Totals may not add due to rounding. Calculations based on unrounded numbers.

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